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Vol. 6, No. 2, Spring 1995 (includes “items of interest,” "citations received,” book review of Edward Casey's Getting Back into Place, and essays by R. Murray Schafer & Louise Chawla).

Environmental & Architectural Phenomenology Newsletter

Vol. 6, No. 2 *Spring 1995*

As of late March, we have received renewals from 115 readers. This number is adequate to keep *EAP* alive, though our margin of survival is slim, and we could use more subscribers. Please, if you know of someone who might be interested, send us his or her address and we will send a complimentary issue.

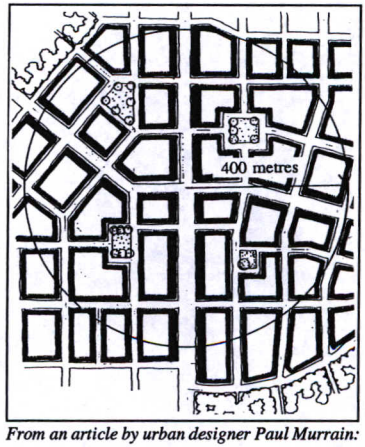
This issue includes a review of philosopher Edward Casey's recent *Getting Back into Place* as well as a diary account on Argentinean soundscapes from Canadian composer and music educator R. Murray Schafer. We also publish an essay by environmental psychologist Louise Chawla that discusses the themes of home and environmental autobiography.

A considerable number of *EAP* members attended the annual conference of the Environmental Design Research Association in Boston. We will run a full account of *EAP* events in the fall issue. Please note that next year's EDRA meeting will be held in Salt Lake City in June. Anyone interested in organizing an *EAP* session for the conference should contact David Seamon as soon as possible.

As always, we need readers' contributions to keep *EAP* continuing. Please don't hesitate to send along your work.

SPEP & SPHS

The 34th annual conference of the **Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (SPEP)** will be held at Chicago's DePaul University, October 12-14, 1995. In conjunction, the **Society for Phenomenology and the Human Sciences (SPHS)** will also hold their annual meeting. SPEP Contact: Prof. John D. Caputo, Philosophy Department, Villanova University, 800 Lancaster Avenue, Villanova, PA 19085 (610-519-4709). SPHS contact: Prof. Keith Doubt, Northeast Missouri State University, Division of Social Sciences, 100 E. Normal Street., Kirksville, MO 63501-4221 (816-785-4322).



From an article by urban designer Paul Murrain: The urban neighborhood as a unit of mixed use. *See p. 5.*

OTHER CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

The 14th annual **International Human Science Conference** will be held under the auspices of the Psychology Department, University of Pretoria, at the ESKOM Conference Centre, Halfway House, Midrand, South Africa, August 21-25, 1995. Contact: Prof. Steen Halling, Psychology Department, Seattle University, Seattle, WA 98122-4460 (206-296-5400).

The conference **Architecture, Soul, and the City** will be held in Devon, England, June 15-18, 1995. Sponsored by the London Convivium of Archetypal Studies, the central topic is imagining a "collective re-souling of the City." Speakers include Gail Thomas, Edward Casey and Christopher Alexander. Address: PO Box 417, London NW3 7RJ (0171-431-1515).

The 3rd annual **Environmental Music Week**, led by composer and soundscape educator R. Murray Schafer, will be held in Canada's Haliburton Forest, July 31-August 5, 1995. Listening exercises and music creativity with voices and instruments are the means by which harmony with nature will be explored. Contact: Haliburton Forest, RR#1, Haliburton, Ont., Canada K0M 1S0 (705-754-2198).

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

The **Institute for the Study of Classical Architecture** supports design and thinking involving the classical system of architecture. The aim is to provide "advanced training in classical building, in both its technical and artistic dimensions." The institute offers academic courses, summer programs, and special events. The group publishes *The Classicist*, devoted "exclusively to contemporary classicism." Address: ISCA, New York Academy of Art, 111 Franklin St, NY, NY 10013 (212-570-7374).

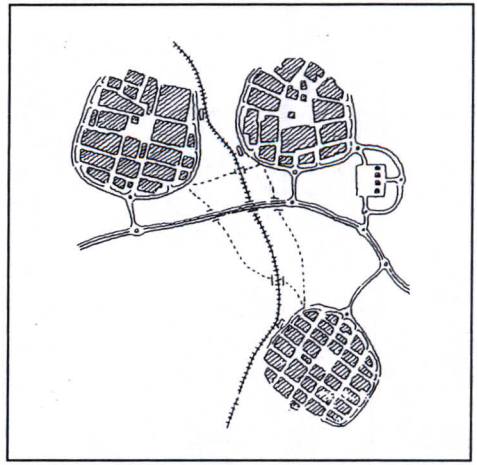
The **Cob Cottage Company** adapts traditional building knowledge to local conditions and trains people in contemporary applications. The group's specialty is *cob* buildings--i.e., structures constructed from unbaked, hand-formed earth and a traditional way of building in Western Europe. The group conducts research and holds hands-on workshops. Address: PO Box 123, Cottage Grove, OR 97424 (503-942-3021).

Environments by Design is a new research journal "for all with concerns in the field of the built environment." It is sponsored by the School of Architecture and the School of Surveying in the Faculty of Design, Kingston University. The prospectus emphasizes that the journal seeks "contributions that span a wide range of methods and theoretical approaches." A priority is studies relating to "the use of and the predicted and actual performace of designed environments (whether it is in a physical, an economic, or an aesthetic sense)." Contact: School of Architecture, Kingston University, Knights Park, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 2QJ England.

The **American School of Geomancy** has announced its workshop series for 1995. Topics include "Geomancy of the San Francisco Bay Area" and "Sensing the Spirit of Place." Address: PO Box 1039, Sebastopol, CA 95473 (707-829-8413).

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Bruce Dyson is Editor of the bimonthly *Neighborhood Caretaker*, a journal presenting information on community development and neighborhood self-help programs. The emphasis is on what Dyson calls "Opening Doors in Mission Acceleration Projects"



From an essay by Paul Murrain: Urban villages as enclaves. *See p. 5.*

(ODMAPs), which are ongoing human development programs usually focused on a particular community.

In regard to the work of his journal, he writes: "We offer two kinds of help. First, analytical processes for understanding major blocks in the group's vision...Second, we offer small amounts of financial assistance, including matching grants up to several thousand dollars. The financial incentive is modest in relation to the project effort required."

News about these various projects is featured in the journal. Address: 1522 Grand Ave., #4C, St. Paul, MN 55105 (612-698-0349).

Norris Brock Johnson teaches in the Anthropology Department at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He writes: "I teach courses on Architecture and Culture, Art and Anthropology, Habitat and Humanity, and a graduate seminar on the Gardens, Shrines, and Temples of Japan. I lived a year and a half in Japan and conducted research in Kyoto and Kamakura on 12th c. Zen Buddhist temple architecture and temple gardens. I am working on a book manuscript on this research." Some of Johnson's recent publications include: "Zen Buddhist Landscapes and the Idea of Temple," *Architecture and Behavior*, *9* (1993):213-226; "Zuisen Temple and

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Garden, Kamakura, Japan, *Journal of Garden History*, *10* (1991):214-236; and "Geomancy, Sacred Geometry, and the Idea of a Garden," *Journal of Garden History*, *9* (1989):1-19. Address: Alumni Bldg. 004A, Chapel Hill, NC 27514.

Artimus Keiffer is a geographer who recently finished doctoral work at Kent State University. His dissertation is entitled, "Architectural Evolution as a Result of Technological Innovation: An Architectural Geography of Single-Family Homes in Akron, Ohio." Address: PO Box 3036, Kent, OH 44240.

We reproduce a portion of Keiffer's abstract:

This dissertation examines the exterior visual facade and the interior spatial layout of single-family homes in Akron, Ohio. It chronicles the reasons for changing appearances and how interior floor plans change due to the enabling factors of technology and the individual choices for its acceptance by homeowners.

The dissertation is based on architectural styles divided into five periods to correlate with shifts in available technology. A cross section of Akron housing was surveyed, and 35 samples from the five periods are studied to gauge the diffusion of technology into the home and how it has changed the orientation of the interior and exterior spatial elements.

The use of interior space and exterior design has been used to recognize the changing American house styles. Technology has enabled homeowners to imbue residential housing with symbol, sign, value and status based on the availability at a specific point in time....

This dissertation suggests explanations for the various individual decisions concerning the acceptance of technology into the home and its subsequent use in exterior facade elements and location in the interior, based on a survey of current homeowners. It also suggests an alternative classification of architecture based on technology.

Suzanne McIntyre is a doctoral student in the Dept of Natural Resources, Recreation & Tourism at Colorado State Univ., Ft. Collins. She writes: "I am delighted to have learned about your work...It will help in my research toward integrating the built environment with nature and fostering a sense of place." Address: 826 W. Oak St, Ft. Collins, CO 80521.

Justin Winkler, A Swiss geographer doing research on the soundscape, writes: "Water is a 'big' topic of growing concern not only for Third-World regions but also for Western urbanized areas. Yet a phenomenological and aesthetic approach to water has so far been marginal (e.g., Schwenk and Schauberger's work--[see the spring 1994 issue of *EAP*]).

"The study *WasserKultur* [Water and Culture], involving research groups in Kassel, Frankfurt and Dresden, links the usual spatial, technical and economic aspects of water with its sensory presence in everyday urban life.

"In April, 1994, social scientists, planners and architects met with artists to draw the outlines of a sound installation on the *Liebfrauenberg* in the town center of *Frankfurt am Main*. In mid-July, three sound walks were built, and a report in German on the results of this work is available on request [address below]. At the same time, two students from Basel carried out a 15-hour observation of the *Main* river. The time was structured in harmonic proportions and represented a "time sculpture."

In September, a *Wasserspirale* [water spiral] took place at Basel's *Liebfrauenberg*. A sound program composed of the work of seven artists served to integrate water with the urban setting near the entrance to the *Kleinmarkthalle* [mall]. The installation changed the soundscape of the square and thereby worked to "wake up" passersby. Their spontaneous comments were documented and will serve as one set of evidence for 'an everyday aesthetics of water'."

Address: AEP WasserKultur, Universitat Gesamthochschule Kassel, Moenchebergstr. 17, 34109 Kassel, Germany (fax: +49-561-804-2485).

CITATIONS RECEIVED

Boschetti, Margaret, 1993. Staying in Place: Farm Homes and Family Heritage. *Housing and Society*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 1-16.

This article examines the meanings of living in a multi-generational home, as experienced by 48 Kansas farm owners residing in houses that had been home to the family over several generations. The author finds that carrying on family tradition and maintaining continuity of family experience were overriding benefits of "staying in place."

Peter Freund & George Martin, 1993. *The Ecology of the Automobile*. NY: Black Rose Books. ISBN 1-895431-82-4.

Chapter 6, "The Phenomenology of Automobility," offers

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insights into the concrete experience of driving and some of the hidden meanings that ground contemporary reliance on the car.

Tom Jay and Brad Matsen. *Reaching Home: Pacific Salmon, Pacific People*. Anchorage: Alaska Northwest Books. ISBN 088240-449-0.

This book celebrates "the Pacific Salmon and examine its recent decline." The book includes essays by Jay and Matsen that describe their personal experiences with salmon. Also included are 101 color photographs by Natalie Fobes that present "compelling images of the remarkable salmon and the peoples bound to them."

John Sallis, 1994. *Stone*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press. ISBN 0-253-20888-2 (paper).

This philosopher examines "the relation of our vision of stone's beauty to what we say, think, and write about stone." He "takes up the various guises and settings in which stone appears: in wild nature, in shelter against the elements, in the tombstones of the Jewish cemetery in Prague, in Greek temples and Gothic cathedrals, and in sculpture and drama."

Stephen Edelglass, Georg Maier, Hans Gebert, and John Davy, 1992. *Matter and Mind: Imaginative Participation in Science*. Hudson, NY: Lindesfarne Press.

These authors, all scientists, "challenge the assumption of the detached observer in scientific research and present examples of a phenomenological approach that includes an awareness of the role of the human knower in the development of scientific concepts."

Hok-Lin Leung, 1993. *City Images: An Internal View*. Kanata, Ontario: Frye Books. ISBN 0-919741-93-2.

This planner studies the "everyday, taken-for-granted images of city dwellers" to gain a better sense of Canada's capital city Ottawa. His method is in-depth interviews with people who include a taxi driver, artist, radio host, meterman, and senior citizens.

Nordisk Arkitekturforskining [*Nordic Journal of Architectural Research*], 1994, *7*, 1.

This number is a special issue on phenomenology and architecture. A majority of the articles are in Norwegian, though a few are in English. Contributors include Christian Norberg-Schulz ("*Stedsbruk*" or "The Use of Place"), Jan Bergtsson ("*Arkitektur och fenomenologi*" or "Architecture and Phenomenology"), Bjorner Torsson ("*Vad Forestaller ett hus*," or "What is a House Representative of"), and David Seamon ("The Life of the Place").

NOTEWORTHY READINGS

Douglas D. Paterson, 1993. Design, Language, and the Preposition: On the Importance of Knowing One's Position in Place. *Trames*, no. 8, Quebec: Faculté de l'aménagement, Université de Montréal, pp. 74-86.

This article considers the meaning of prepositions for language and design. Paterson argues that the preposition "is an essential, fundamental tool for analyzing the city and its landscapes." He suggests that "the preposition possesses immense powers to inform us about 'good' design and the creation of place"(p. 75).

After exploring how human life is supported by prepositional relationships like *above*, *under*, *in front of, behind, inside, on, around, from, along, away from, by*, and so forth, Paterson considers how different design theories consider the preposition.

He concludes that successful design always includes prepositional relationships in some form and then presents five prepositional criteria for good design--for example, "every object, position in space, and every place should operate within the full range of its prepositional possibilities" (p. 82) or "'good' objects, positions in space or places invariably have one or two prepositional possibilities that are accentuated..." (p. 83).

At one point, Paterson describes the limited prepositional possibilities typically found in the present-day urban plaza:

One is invariably, poorly located *on the surface* of the plaza, with no distinct *here and there*. The *above* is inevitably whatever happens in the surrounding developments; the *below* rarely enters the imagination and, if it does, one "sees" a parking lot.

The *centre* may not exist at all or if present, is either incorrectly located or lacking in energy. And only a few struggling trees give us a sense of being *under*.

Consider, in contrast, the prepositional possibilities in the Campo in Sienna. The space resonates with *beside, around, along, across, here and there*, and *above and below*. But the real, almost heady accentuation of the prepositional possibility in the space lies in the increasingly collected energy of the space

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as it rushes *towards a centre*, a shell-like opening in the ground that forces our imagination into an underground, a hell, to a great *below*. In virtually every sense, the failure of the modern plaza is a prepositional failure, and the success of the great plazas a prepositional success" (p. 83).

Paul Murrain, 1993. Urban Expansion: Look Back and Learn, pp. 83-94 in *Making Better Places: Urban Design Now*, Richard Hayward and Sue McGlynn, eds. London: Butterworth.

Paul Murrain is a co-author of *Responsive Environments* (Butterworth, 1985; see *EAP*, *2*, 2), a primer for urban design that argues for a permeable, diverse, legible city fostering place variety and user choice.

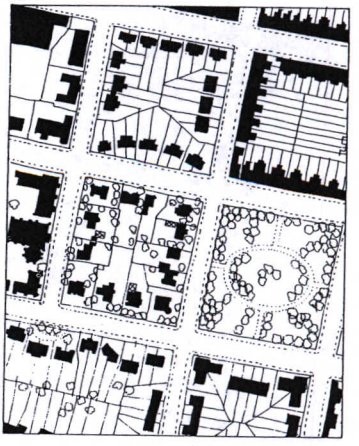
In this essay, part of a collection of articles by faculty and associates of the Oxford Joint Centre for Urban Design, where *Responsive Environments* was conceived, Murrain reviews his thinking since that book and continues to argue for what he calls here "interactive urbanism"--an "attitude of supportive interaction and exchange, be it inner city, suburb, or small town" (p. 85).

He believes that, whether in terms of the older traditional city or the new "edge city," the need is fine-grained, mixed-use neighborhoods that will help to counter the "isolationist tendencies" that, physically, promote low densities and sprawl and, socially, contribute to societal cynicism and conflict. He quotes Hannah Arendt who wrote in 1958 that:

> The public realm as the common world, gathers us together and yet prevents us falling apart. What makes mass society so difficult to bear is not the number of people involved but rather that the world between them has lost its power to gather them together, to relate and separate them at one and the same time (p. 83).

In this article, Murrain expands the vision of *Responsive Environments* by arguing that a diverse, humanly-scaled community will also be a *sustainable* community in the sense that it will minimize energy for getting about and provide the maximal number of opportunities for the most people (since most daily needs will be within walking distance of many residents and users). He explains:

> Sustainability [for urban design] is about structuring town form such that the individual has choice but never at the expense of the collective, thus empowering as many of the citizens as possible to successfully determine the outcome of their daily lives in so far as the layout of the town and the location of uses can assist (p. 85).



The perimeter block as developed in Responsive Environments.

In the remainder of the essay, Murrain explores ways by which design can practically contribute to such sustainability and what he calls "fine-grained mixed use" (p. 86). He argues that the major purpose of cities is to facilitate exchange, whether of "information, friendship, material goods, culture, knowledge, insight, or skills." A truly sustainable community would "maximize this exchange while minimizing the travel necessary to do it" (p. 85).

Drawing on the space syntax work of Bill Hillier (see *EAP*, *4*, 2), Murrain argues that, before the variety of uses and activities be considered as they contribute to exchange, it is crucial that the designer consider *permeability*--the "extent to which the street system is connected, integrated, and intelligible" (p.86).

Permeability is essential because people can't use a place if they can't get to it. Design-wise, the best pathway scheme for permeability is the orthogonal or deformed grid, which should be "consistent through a variety of scales down to the finest grain to allow perimeter blocks of development to exist with clear distinguishable public and private sides" (p. 86).

Murrain then discusses such issues as variety,

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concentration, and proximity and points to design examples that do or do not facilitate an interactive urbanism. Throughout, he argues that real urban places are synergistic and that traditional urban places have regularly been more successful than modernist schemes at promoting lively streets and diversity:

> It is the connectivity and integration that turns an accumulation of things into something called urbanism. [The] true nature of sustainability... is about parts and wholes--either a new part to an existing whole or a new whole made of parts. Traditional connected cities tend to success on both counts.... (p. 88).

Jane Jacobs, 1993 [originally 1961]. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Modern Library Edition. NY: Random House. ISBN 0-679-60047-7.

For advocates of a humanly-scaled city with lively, diverse streets, Jane Jacobs' groundbreaking book has been a shining model since it was published in 1961. Many have worried that the book would sooner or later go out of print as suburban sprawl and mega-malls become the only built world that many younger people know, especially in North America. Happily, Random House has chosen to include the book in its Modern Library series, and *Death and Life* is now secure for a new generation of readers.

Like Murrain [see preceding entry], Jacobs argues for small-grained, walkable neighborhoods of diverse uses and activities that support lively street life and informal sociability. One of her major accomplishments is to identify four factors that she believes contribute to and reap the benefits of active streets--short blocks, buildings different in type and age, a high concentration of people, and several uses to which people must necessarily go (e.g., places of residence and work).

For this new edition, Jacobs has written a short forward in which she interprets the book as an early contribution to an "ecology of the city," whose heart is "the humble, vital services performed by grace of good city streets and neighborhoods" (p. xviii). The box, right, reproduces a section of her forward that discusses the continuing power of a planning and design ethos that is anti-urban.

Since Jacobs' work there have been several other works determined to revitalize the city in ways that

> Anticity planning remains amazingly sturdy in American cities. It is still embodied in thousands of regulations, bylaws, and codes, also in bureaucratic timidities owing to accepted practices, and in unexamined public attitudes hardened by time. Thus, one may be sure that there have been enormous and dedicated efforts in the face of these obstacles wherever one sees stretches of old city buildings that have been usefully recycled for new and different purposes; wherever sidewalks have been widened and vehicular roadways narrowed precisely where they should be--on streets in which pedestrian traffic is bustling and plentiful; wherever downtowns are not deserted after their offices close; wherever new, fine-grained mixtures of street uses have been fostered successfully; wherever new buildings have been sensitively inserted among old ones to knit up holes and tatters in a city neighborhood so that the mending is all but invisible....
>
> In Chapter Twenty [of *Death and Life*] I proposed that the ground levels of self-isolating projects within cities could be radically erased and reconstituted with two objects in view: linking the projects into the normal city by fitting them out with plentiful, new, connecting streets; and converting the projects themselves into urban places at the same time, by adding diverse new facilities along those old streets. The catch here, of course, is that new commercial facilities would need to work out economically, as a measure of their genuine and not fake usefulness.
>
> It is disappointing that this sort of radical replanning has not been tried--as far as I know--in the more than thirty years since this book was published. To be sure, with every decade that passes, the task of carrying out the proposal would seen to be more difficult. That is because anticity projects, especially massive public housing projects, tend to cause their city surroundings to deteriorate, so that as time passes, less and less healthy adjoining city is available to tie into.
>
> Even so, good opportunities still exist for converting city projects into city. Easy ones ought to be tried first on the premise that this is a learning challenge, and it is good policy for all learning to start with easy cases and work up to more difficult ones. The time is coming when we will sorely need to apply this learning to suburban sprawls since it is unlikely we can continue extending them without limit. The costs in energy waste, infrastructure waste, and land waste are too high. Yet if already existing sprawls are intensified, in favor of thriftier use of resources, we need to have learned how to make the intensifications and linkages attractive, enjoyable, safe and sustainable--for foot people as well as car people (pp. xiii-xiv).

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build on Jacobs' original vision--William Whyte's studies of urban sociability, Bill Hillier's space syntax, Christopher Alexander's urban pattern language, and Paul Murrain and colleagues' efforts for "responsive environments."

Jacobs' book remains the most astute generalist justification for these more applied works. As she repeats the point in her new forword,

> Whenever and wherever societies have florished and prospered rather than stagnated and decayed, creative and workable cities have been at the core of the phenomenon; they have pulled their weight and more. It is the same still. Decaying cities, declining economies, and mounting social troubles travel together. The combination is not coincidental (p. xviii).

BOOK REVIEW

Edward S. Casey, 1993. *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World.* Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press. ISBN 0-253-31331-7.

With a growing scholarly and popular literature on the topic, it is timely for a philosopher to offer a foundational rethinking of *place*. Amos Rapoport (1994, p. 4), a venerable critic of the term, bemoans with some credibility the fact that "*place* is never clearly defined and hence vague; when definitions are found, they are illogical." There is a need to rethink the ontological foundations of place, to ground the subsequent *praxis* of the design professions.

Does philosopher Edward Casey's *Getting Back into Place* answer to this need? Immediately in the first chapter, Casey brings to light the ontological roots of the phenomenon of place:

> place, by virtue of its unencompassability by anything other than itself, is at once the limit and the condition of all that exists... [P]lace serves as the *condition* of all existing things...To be is to be in place (pp. 15-16).

Casey laments modern philosophy's forgetting about place, instead giving overwhelming priority to time. In a most thought-provoking chapter, he chronicles the growing modern reliance upon clock time and schedules and mourns the subservience of the notion of place to both time-order and geometric space: "Is there a way out of this double-bind, which we have managed to impose on ourselves so stealthily and yet so destructively?" (p. 11). The way out, for Casey, is through a reconsideration of that most taken-for-granted element of lived experience--place.

AN ONTOLOGY OF IMPLACEMENT

The initial chapter on the ontology of implacement is, to my mind, one of the most powerful and persuasive in the book. Casey makes several unique observations, for instance, pointing out how the Hebrew word *Makom*, the name of God, means Place (p. 17). This conception of God as Place not only is philosophically less problematic than the more common idea of God as person but also captures the meaning of place as existential limit and source of all that is.

In a somewhat unusual move, the author shows how even numbers are platial. Invoking Archytas's Pythagorean observation that "every number is in its proper place," Casey is able to show how the right place in a numerical sequence is its limit. Once again, we see how place implies existential boundary and signifies originary meaning (p. 16). Whether through number or myth, time or mind, place is shown in its ontological signification to be "prior to all things" and as such, the ground even of chaos: "the object or event need not be well formed, regular, or predictable" (p. 13).

DISPLACEMENT AND BEING-AT-HOME

From the ontology of implacement, Casey moves in chapter 2 to the phenomenon of displacement. Here we begin to sense the unique contribution of phenomenology to discussions of place. While places are prior to all things, they are not "pregiven natural absolutes"(p. 31). Just as they are not metaphysical substances--objective containers of experience--neither are they subjective, epistemological constructs. Lived experience preserves the interplay between the human body and its environment so that "implacement is an ongoing cultural process with an experimental edge" (p. 31).

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Being-at-home is not a permanent condition but always invokes the possibility of *Unheimlichkeit* as well. Being lost at sea or in a snowbound terrain may remind us that such events are not placeless but, rather, are intrinsic to the process of dwelling itself. That this recognition is central to Casey's argument is clear: part V is dedicated to the theme of "Moving Between Places," and his final chapter is entitled "Homeward Bound: Ending (in) the Journey."

Phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty's heritage is sensed in this book's pervasive recognition of the power of embodiment in interpretations of place. Casey devotes part II entirely to this theme of "The Body in Place," and, indeed, the volume as a whole rests on the assumption of the lived body and place as "congruent counterparts" (p. 103). We are "bound by body to be in place" (p. 104).

Five dyadic pairs of here-there, near-far, up-down, above-below, and right-left help to focus discussion on the meaning of body-in-place. The observations in this section, while interesting, are not particularly novel if one has read Merleau-Ponty's work. What this section does accomplish, however, is that it secures the ontological foundations of the remainder of the book in its recognition of the belonging of embodiment to implacement.

BUILT AND WILD PLACES

Casey then devotes the central sections of the work to built and wild places (sections III and IV). Distinguishing between two primary modes of dwelling, he describes the dialectical interplay between the "hestial" and the "hermetic." Hestia is the ancient Greek goddess of the hearth. Hestial dwelling aims at centredness, and self-enclosure (p. 133).

Hermes, on the other hand, is the god of roads, of wayfarers and of movement. "As a god of intersections, he is responsible for the disposition of entire regions of public space... Under the sign of Hermes, the con-centric becomes ec-centric" (pp. 137-8). Movement from the hestial to the hermetic explains the parallel progression from domestic curvilinearity to urban rectilinearity.

On the other hand, it is precisely in the reverberation between the two superintending deities--between enclosure and openness--that the essence of dwelling is grounded. Casey examines gardens as they deconstruct this duality, which is defined exclusively by neither hestial nor hermetic dwelling modes: "We may pause while perambulating a garden, but we do not stay for the night...In an embowered garden, I *almost* reside, yet I *also* walk about" (pp. 169-170).

The experience of the garden leaves one "on the edge of dwelling"--indicating that the experience of implacement is rarely fixed or uni-dimensional. As an e-vent (in Heidegger's sense of the word), place is never geometrically specifiable. And so "just as the lived body refuses to be reduced to a sheerly physical fact or object, so built places...cannot be confined to their purely physicalist predicates."(pp. 178)

Some of Casey's most moving sections of the book relate to "Wild Places" in part IV. There is much that is original and insightful in his descriptions of the cultural and historical progression of understanding of the wild. On the one hand, wilderness is understood as that place where one loses one's way, becoming bewildered in a starkly "alien world" (*Fremdwelt*)(p. 229). On the other hand, the very concept of wilderness is a human construct, meaningful only in relation to people. Nature and culture are seen to be interrelated, even in the wild.

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in the end, however, one cannot help but feel that "nature" prevails in this book, at the expense of built spaces. Wilderness is explored with much greater wisdom and sensitivity than cultivated places, and this is unfortunate. Casey completes part III with only a passing reference to "house-city-region" (p. 181) One comes away with the impression that romantic musings on Thoreau do not take us as far in our awareness of place as a more extensive deconstruction of urbane images might have done.

Similarly, Casey could make more of the phenomenon of time than he does. That clock time has affected our geometric and physicalist determinations of space is clear. However, *primordial* time as Heidegger has understood it ontologically defines dwelling. This is acknowledged in some way in the final chapters of the book, in the discussion of the intertwining of journey and temporality. One senses that a more attentive listening to the phenomenon of time could have helped to shed light on the essence of harried and hurried contemporary places.

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Finally, this book remains for me very much a disciplinary, phenomenological text. Such a volume cannot be all things to all people. But its wordy, meandering style may not appeal to practitioners of place. Casey refers to the book as a journey, and the characterization is apt. There is a vague sense of wandering toward conclusions, which are then superseded by yet broader insights, with a gentle transition to newly emergent themes. In the end, one definitely completes the journey philosophically enriched. Finally, the ontological foundations of place receive their due.

However, by virtue of the presentation style, I worry that only philosophers will be listening. All I can do--and I do so with conviction--is to urge designers and other practitioners to persevere with this book. At best, it may alter the very foundations of their *praxis*. At worst, it should persuade the critics that a sound philosophical justification for

continuing to research this elusive phenomenon of place does indeed exist.

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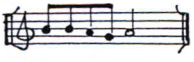
ARGENTINEAN SOUNDSCAPES, NOVEMBER 1994

R. Murray Schafer

R. Murray Schafer is a Canadian composer and writer well known for his Tuning of the World, *a history of the sonic environment, or* soundscape *(see* EAP, 3, *1, 7-9). Schafer regularly gives lectures and workshops on sound education throughout the world. The following is an extract from an account describing his recent lecture and teaching experiences in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Address: R.R.2, Indian River, Ontario K0L 2B0 Canada.*

November 4, Buenos Aires. Spacious apartment thirteen stories up on the *Avenida Pueyrredon* waiting to be taken to my first lecture. Subject: *El paisaje sonoro* [soundscape]. A good display of it below the window. I counted 350 car horns over a one-hour period this afternoon.

Quite a variety too: one-tone cranky horns, two-tone cranky horns, two-tone strident ones, occasionally a major second apart but usually a minor third, then regal horns tuned to the interval of a major third. These seem the loudest. Sometimes there's a fancy horn. I just heard one bugling this motif:



Per sonare, to sound through: personality. Short toots. Bright colors. "Hello!" "Nice day!" "Hey, watch it!" "I'm going first!" Nothing really nasty in the Argentinean horn, even when a street blockage causes an eruption of them. The cursing horns glitter vivaciously.

The Argentinean horn is pure self-advertisement. The engine roar too. And the engines are substantially louder than in North American cars. There are few automatics and few air conditioners: windows are open, but it is rare to hear a radio. Cristian doesn't even have one in the Fiat he picked us up in at the airport. As soon as summer hits Canada, half the cars turn into boom boxes for petulant rock-rap fanatics. Here people dance on the gear shift instead of the radio dial.

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The variety of sirens in B.A. is astounding. There are two-tone oscillating horns, electronic glissandi, and I even thought I heard one or two old disc sirens. Yelping sirens and blockbuster air horns are also popular as methods of torpedoing traffic. But no standardization. One has the impression that sirens are chosen on whim at some bloodthirsty toy store.....

Lecture went well with over three hundred people present. A nice touch at the reception afterwards. A young man entered with a large bouquet of carnations and began handing them out to everyone. Said he thought it might be nice to end a lecture on noise with flowers and everyone agreed.

The next day I hear that B.A. has been identified on the radio as the fourth noisiest city in the world because I mentioned that my rough car horn count would place it somewhere on a par with New York, and rather below Paris and Cairo in this respect. How myths are started!

November 6. First course over. We covered a lot in two days under sunny skies. The students were almost all young, so we could move faster, without philosophizing, without discussing methodology, without, in fact, discussing anything--just *doing*. And that is the Schafer method: to keep doing one exercise after another in no particular order except to maintain a balance between the physically active and the mentally stimulating, so that the whole takes on the form of a mosaic or cluster rather than a linear progression. It is perhaps a technique I learned from McLuhan.

November 7. The second course, this one in Acoustic Ecology, is being held in the *Museo Romulo Raggio*, a vintage mansion in the Italian style, surrounded by an attractive garden that shelters it somewhat from the reverberant busses hurtling down the street at the side, but not at all from the screaming jets taking off from the airport.

The air inside the building is cool and somewhat stagnant. I notice that the participants (about 20 in this course) are talking in hushed tones in the marble-floored ballroom where the course is to be given--as if they're afraid to stir up the dead. I decide to make this the excuse for our first investigation, divining the former life of the building from its materials and the sounds they make.

First, doors.[1] There are a great variety of these: pantry doors that squeak in alarm and seem to be calling out "thief." Double doors to the ballroom that roll back majestically like a snare drum announcement: "The Prince of ...!" Large heavy doors that seam to be saying "Leave me alone!" Glass doors that shake like countesses loaded with jewelry... Even the windows had personalities: some creaked and complained: "I need air!"--or shivered on their hinges and said, "Close me, it's chilly outside!"

We determined the servants' quarters and listened to the way the doors here groaned painfully. Between this area and the main household a thick-set door closed quietly but emphatically, reminding us that class distinction is also a sound.

The floors of every room yielded their personality too. Those of the halls and ballroom were marble to take the spurred boots of cavaliers. Those of the library and music room (or what we took to be these) were of inlaid wood, and ornate wood panelling in the library produced a muted acoustic that gave the voice no encouragement.

We decided that a room with timbered flooring strung over wide-set beams allowing it to boom under firm footsteps was the master's bedroom. The adjacent room surely belonged to the mistress. It was smaller and, though the floor was also timbered, it was strung on close-set beams so that while there was authority in the sound as one walked across it, the stentorian punch of the master's room was missing.

Then we discovered a smaller room in which the door clicked open and shushed over a thick carpet as it swung back to reveal two padded sofas. We decided this was "the lovers' room."

We spent a good part of the morning tapping walls and cupboards, opening everything that could be opened, touching all the materials and fabrics, measuring the reverberation in each room (those with parabolic ceilings had an immediately recognizable *Eigenton*).

The whole palace, dead and deserted, revealed the intricacies of its former life to the investigative ear. "Is this the bathtub of a prince?" I ask, turning on a modest trickle of hot water in the principal bathroom.

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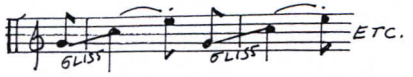
"No."

And the discussion turned to ways in which water sounds express character, concluding with some remarks on Japanese water harps (*suikinkutsu*). These were resonant jars, buried in the earth under wash-basins outside tea houses during the Edo period (1603-1867). I have also encountered them in the washrooms of private houses. The water trickled down into them through the stones at the base of the wash basin, making little pinging sounds, not loud but clearly audible. There would always be a slight delay before the water harp would begin so that listeners had to wait to hear it. In the interval they would hear the other sounds that were present. The *suikinkutsu* is a beautiful example of designing for the ear and I want the students in this course to begin to think of ways to initiate soundscape designs into their own lives.

We talk of how walking on different surfaces produces different sounds (another subject well understood by the Japanese gardener) and I set a homework assignment: Let's make a Sound Path down the corridors of the *Palacio*. Let every footstep sound different. Bring all the resonant materials you can find to class tomorrow, anything to transform walking into an interesting sonic experience.

Tonight a siren in the street, totally idiosyncratic to my ear:



Could it be that someone has tampered with the circuitry to produce this eccentricity or is it the first of a new line of devices about to roll off the assembly line in multiples of a thousand? In any case it endorses my earlier observation that one selects sirens in Buenos Aires the way one chooses chocolates in Switzerland.

November 8. Every step was a miniature acoustic wonder as one walked over pebbles, shells, wooden planks, chips, scraps of metal, plastic cups, sugar, pasta, snapping twigs, dried leaves and the husks of nuts. Everyone got a chance to walk the Sound Path. Some walked quickly--violently. Others walked slowly bringing out the richness of each texture. Some walked barefoot. One boy tried to walk silently, taking ten minutes to crinkle his way from end to end.

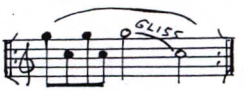
I mentioned Rabindranath Tagore's school in India. Tagore wouldn't let the children wear shoes so that they might always sense direct contact with the earth. We all took our shoes off. I suggested a walk in the garden, eyes closed holding hands. I thought it would be a good listening experience. I underestimated the nettles in the grass. "Ei! Ei! Ei!" cried the Argentineans while I cried "Ow!" the exclamations of pain differing between our two cultures. My hypersensitive feet had murdered my ears.

I gave a student a few of the materials from the Sound Path and told him to improvise a little piece with them: A couple of stones, two chunks of metal and some dried branches. I asked the rest of the class to turn their backs and write a fantasy story provoked by the sounds they heard. I had not expected the stories to be so fantastic and surrealistic.

With another class I had played a tape of the entry into Vancouver Harbor (from *The Vancouver Soundscape*) and asked them to describe where they thought they were. To my surprise they fantasized extravagantly. Not even all of them associated the sounds with the sea. They heard the fog horns as scolding parents or torturing army generals, the buoys as church bells or the glittering lights of fabled cities, and so on. The polysemousness of sounds has never been more evident to me than in conducting these two experiments.

****

Another siren never heard before:



Another toy to deaden the pain.

NOTE

1. The idea of speaking or singing doors comes from Nikolai Gogol's story "Old-World Landowners," where he discussed the various voices of doors in a country house: "Thin falsetto," "husky bass," and so forth.

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REACHING HOME: REFLECTIONS ON ENVIRONMENTAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Louise Chawla

Environmental psychologist Louise Chawla first presented the following ideas as a participant in a special 1994 EDRA workshop, "Environmental Ghosts: Negative and Traumatic Images of Place," organized by environmental psychologist Nora Rubinstein. Chawla is author of In the First Country of Places: Nature, Poetry, and Childhood Memory *(Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1994). Address: Norwegian Centre for Child Research, University of Trondheim, N-7055 Dragvoll, Norway.*

The geographer Anne Buttimer (1980) has described our relationship to place as an exchange between *home* and *horizons of reach*. Home embodies our desire for rest, territory, security, community. Horizons of reach represent movement, range, adventure, innovation.

Buttimer notes that these complementary poles of human existence function geographically, socially, and imaginatively. When the home and reach of our imaginations and our social affiliations are fulfilled in the place where we live, we enjoy centered lives. Often, however, what we desire to be and the people we desire to be with conflict with where we are.

The environmental psychologist Nora Rubinstein (1993) has brought attention to the reality that, all too often, family violence creates places where people are housed but not homed, where basic needs for security and community are violated. She has suggested that there is a special horror associated with victimization in the dwelling, a place that our culture defines as "sacred" to families.

Considered together, the observations of Buttimer and Rubenstein demonstrate the ambivalence of home. We expect the *house* where we live to be *home* to the degree that we often use these words interchangeably. We use physical functions of home--shelter, rest, nourishment--as metaphors for psychological needs. Yet reality often frustrates us, so that the meaning of *home* contains within itself two poles: our longing for familiarity and comfort; and imaginative horizons of reach beyond where we are.

This ambivalence regarding the meaning of home is inevitable. We need psychological comfort and rest as well as food, and physical familiarity partially provides it. The settled, however, does not hold us. We also inhabit reaches of thought and imagination that trouble our rest. We cannot help but compare the present with the past and future, noticing change and loss. We ponder limitation and mortality. We conceive distant or fictional places that tempt us with total fulfillment.

Western culture accentuates this natural ambivalence. This essay traces some leading cultural associations with the idea of home through a few influential texts of classical, medieval, and early modern philosophy and literature, with a focus on major shifts in the assumptions that these texts reveal.

PLATONIC IDEALS OF HOME

In the great cultural current of Platonism, "home" is an inner attainment of the philosophic mind. According to Plato's doctrine of anamnesis, our souls preexist our earthly birth; our true home is our place of origin among the gods. In this sense, we return home through a recovery of memory. But because our origin exists outside time, this recollection takes us beyond time--rather than backward through it.

Through the medium of Socrates, Plato describes this return home in a myth in the *Phaedrus*. According to Socrates, when the soul nourishes itself on beauty, wisdom, and goodness, it regrows wings and ascends to the company of the gods, "even to the summit of the arch that supports the heavens" (247b). There, standing on the plain of Truth, it looks down upon the turning sphere of the universe:

> It is there that true being dwells, without color or shape, that cannot be touched; reason alone, the soul's pilot, can behold it, and all true knowledge is knowledge thereof. Now even as the mind of a god is nourished by reason and knowledge, so also is it with every soul that has a care to receive her proper food; wherefore when at last she has beheld being she is well content, and contemplating truth she is nourished and prospers, until the heaven's revolution brings her back full circle.... And when she has...feasted upon all else that has true being, she descends again within the heavens and comes back home. (247c-e)

The home that the soul returns to is the dwelling

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place of its ruling god, not far from this still point at the axis of the universe.

CHRISTIAN IDEALS OF HOME

After the fall of Rome, most of Plato's dialogues were lost to Western Europe, not to directly inspire art and literature again until the Renaissance. The essence of the Platonic sense of home--that it is a place of philosophic calm beyond the physical limits of the universe--was not lost, however. It was dramatically popularized by one of the most influential books of the Middle Ages, *The Consolation of Philosophy* by Boethius.

A sixth-century Christian, a scholar of Plato and Aristotle, and a leader of the Roman senate under the Ostrogothic king Theodoric, Boethius was at the height of his power and fortune when he was falsely accused of treason. He wrote *The Consolation* in exile in prison, awaiting torture and execution.

As the book begins, he lies on his bed in his cell, prematurely aged, shaking with grief. Suddenly the vision of a tall imperious woman, Lady Philosophy, appears to him. She scolds him for his anxieties and tells him that she knows the real cause of his despair: he has forgotten himself and his true country.

"You have not been driven out of your homeland," she tells him, "you have willfully wandered away" (Book 1, Prose 5). What disturbs her, she says, is his attitude, but given his former devotion to her, she makes him a promise that echoes the *Phaedrus*:

> I...show you the path [to] take you home. And I... give wings to your mind which can carry you aloft, so that, without further anxiety, you may return safely to your own country under my direction, along my path, and by my means (Book 4, Prose 1).

The path home proves to be the practice of philosophy, by which Boethius is convinced that true happiness is perfect goodness. Though only God is perfectly good, human beings can dwell in the proximity of God by sharing godly qualities.

The theme of returning to the soul's true home, to God, echoes through the centuries, and still rings in church hymns. This tradition contains two competing claims. One is that the soul's home is a *place*, paradise, vividly imaged on church walls. It is this tradition, that the soul's true home is heaven, a place never reached until after death, that persists in conventional liturgies.

But in the Neoplatonic tradition preserved by Boethius and revived in the Renaissance, home is a *practice*, philosophic contemplation, achievable in this life when a virtuous soul secures a point of calm from which to survey the ever-turning cycles of the universe. As an embodied practice, it is temporarily entered into; as Lady Philosophy reminds Boethius:

> No one is so completely happy that he does not have to endure some loss. Anxiety is the necessary condition of human happiness since happiness is never completely achieved and never permanently kept. (Book 2, Prose 4)

MODERN DEFINITIONS OF HOME

In the seventeenth century, with the spread of middle-class wealth and the secularization of society, home became a present place of earthly comforts (see Rybczynski, 1986). First celebrated in Dutch paintings, then spread throughout Europe and North America by the fashion of family portraits posed in the library or garden, these domestic images of material fulfillment are now marketed worldwide by the housing and home products industry.

But perhaps because total earthly happiness is "never completely achieved and never permanently kept," the Platonic search for an inner security that transcends temporal change has not been lost. In eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Romanticism, it was assimilated into another transformation.

As Boethius joined a Platonic sense of home to the Christian search for salvation, Romanticism joined it to modern secularism. After early adulthood in Cambridge, London, and the European Continent, Wordsworth returned to the place that was home to him, the Lake District of his childhood. He did so with the intent of consecrating "the simple produce of the common day" ("The Excursion," line 55) as he first knew it in childhood. Nowhere else, he said, could he regain life's fundamental sensations:

> Tis, but I cannot name it, tis the sense
> Of majesty, and beauty, and repose,
> A blended holiness of earth and sky,
> Something that makes this individual Spot,
> This small Abiding-place of many Men,
> A termination and a last retreat,

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A Centre, come from whereso'er you will,
A Whole without dependence or defect,
Made for itself; and happy in itself,
Perfect Contentment, Unity entire.
("The Recluse," Part I, Book I--Home at Grasmere, lines 142-151)

The "Perfect Contentment, Unity entire" that Plato associated with the plain of Truth at the axis of the universe, the still center of the turning world outside the limits of the earth itself, Wordsworth grounded in a personal geography.

Honored in 1843 as England's Poet Laureate, Wordsworth combined the Romantic effort to spiritualize the secular world with Victorian sentimentality and domesticity. Like the Neoplatonic tradition he consciously inherited, Wordsworth identified the soul's true home with mature meditation. This home that was now a physical place of personal origin could never be understood and attained until one returned to it sadder and wiser, rediscovering it after "years that bring the philosophic mind" ("Ode on Intimations of Immortality," 10.19).

Nevertheless, this Romantic home was now an earthly place, associated with recollection as much as reflection, and fundamentally with impressions of childhood. "Spots of time" is what Wordsworth called memories of formative places and events that "retain/a renovating virtue" (*Prelude* 12.208-210).

Not coincidentally, he chose this term at the same time that landscape painting, which permanently fixes visual spots of time, was becoming a popular art form. In paintings, engravings, soon photographs, and poetry more pictorial than philosophic, this conjunction of home, memory, and childhood became, quite literally, a Victorian cottage industry.[1]

But the Romantics also passed on to the Victorians another side to these happy images: the doppelganger, the double, the Gothic novel in which sinister ghosts haunt the halls and byways of home.

In the 20th century, this emphasis upon memory, childhood, places of fear behind masks of nostalgia, ghosts that must be exorcised through reason, reclothes itself in psychoanalytic theory. In the work of Freud, spots of time became screen memories--indelible detailed images from childhood, usually neutral or benign--that signal repressed sexual experiences (Freud 1960). Home, in the 20th century, has become a suspect site of childhood trauma.

AN UNSETTLED AMBIVALENCE

Explorations of home in design research have assimilated this complex cultural legacy. Following the example of Wordsworth and landscape painting, residential and environmental autobiographies commonly involve detailed narrative and visual images. Autobiographers assume that it is necessary to recover the past in order to understand the present, and that keys to self-understanding can be found in geographic spots of time.

Following secular material conventions, home is commonly assumed to coincide with a house, domestic habits and comforts. Anticipating the emergence of either "renovating virtues" or Gothic ghosts, designers justify environmental and residential autobiographies on the grounds that they will reveal how people seek to recreate, or avoid, childhood places in their adult houses and gardens (Cooper Marcus 1978, Hester 1979, Ladd 1977, Rubenstein 1982).

Nora Rubenstein (1982) notes that analyses of environmental autobiographies emphasize positive, even nostalgic images, while negative experiences have gone largely neglected. She suggests this failure to acknowledge that the house often harbors violence and abuse may be encouraged by our cultural designation of the house as a sacred place of domestic intimacy (a home both secular and spiritual).

To expose this deception, psychology provides tools similar to those used to create it: a focus on recovering and elaborating visual images from the past, flashbacks, screen memories. Again, the assumption is that spots of time contain keys to our self-identity.

The unsettled ambivalence of the word *home*, in which we tenuously seek to dwell, persists in this effort to more accurately explore different dimensions of environmental autobiography. If the idea of home expresses a basic human need for rest, territory, and security (Buttimer 1980), then we will seek it in a still point, a stable spot of time. Even when we protest that the reality of home imprisons us and denies us the horizons of reach necessary to find our true identity, we seek to expose the illusion through alternative images, frozen frames of haunted time.

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HEALING MEMORY

What other ways do we have of understanding, expressing, researching the meaning of home? In the EDRA workshop sessions which reopened the subject of environmental autobiography, Leanne Rivlin suggested that memory itself is a motion, an ongoing commentary in which we repeatedly readjust past, present, and future, rather than a stable archive.

Clare Cooper Marcus proposed that we would be wise to exchange the Platonic and Christian desire for a still true home that transcends time for a Buddhist acceptance that everything is in change and motion and we are part of this larger fluid unity. Jerome Tognoli reminded participants that the goal of trauma counseling is to provide a safe relationship in which people can acknowledge the realities of past pain so that they can subsequently "get on with their lives."

Perhaps stages of recovery from trauma provide the best guide to how researchers and teachers who use environmental autobiographies should proceed into this risky territory.

First, as the trauma counselor Judith Herman (1992) has described, there is a need for safety. This need includes physical safety and safety within personal relationships. For people gifted with restorative spots in time that appear "a Centre... made for itself and happy in itself," the creation of environmental autobiographies may be a safe prelude that enables them to hazard other, troubling memories and a changing self-identity.

Not knowing what the process will initiate, however, it is critical for teachers and researchers to communicate safety within the classroom or research setting, interrupt memories when it appears that unmanageable pain may surface, and be prepared to recommend opportunities for therapy.

According to Herman, the second stage in healing is remembrance and mourning, when people reconstruct the story of their lives with appropriate emotion. In this case memory functions, as Leanne Rivlin has suggested, less as still pictures and more as an adaptive narrative. In the final stage of recovery, personal memories are acknowledged to testify to larger histories of exploitation and abuse in which the individual is one of many. By speaking out as a witness to this history, people can accept that loss, even major trauma, as much as happiness, unite them to the human community.

To apply Buttimer's terms, in this stage of wisdom, we integrate home as an ideal of security and rest *and* as a painful reality with our horizon of reach, whereas we risk movement and new identities. In this centering, the achievement of home turns out to be, once again, more of a practice than a place--and, like the examples of Plato, Boethius, and Wordsworth, a reflective, philosophical practice.

Unlike the meditations of Plato and Boethius, this contemporary practice no longer seeks to transcend the universe. If we begin to expand the boundaries of environmental autobiographies by inviting memories of pain as well as pleasure, we initiate a process of remembrance that commits us to the goal of healing. In doing so, we become part of a larger history of current cultural transformation.

Like the Platonic soul at the axis of the world, we survey ever-moving gain and loss, but we no longer seek to escape this world of transience. Within the resources of this universe, we commit ourselves to creating the temporary stabilities of home in real earthly places.

NOTE

1. It was often pure nostalgia. Consider, for example, Thomas Hood: "I remember, I remember/The house where I was born,/The little window where the sun/Came peeping in at morn" ("I Remember, I Remember," lines 1-4).

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